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Captured Hamas cell reveals new kidnap methods

By ABIEH O'SULLIVAN

Soldiers have been put on alert against attempts to kidnap them by Hamas terrorists, after members of a Hamas cell captured last week revealed a new method of luring soldiers into cars.

Only yesterday was it allowed to be published that members of a Hamas cell were captured on November 25 when their car aroused the suspicion of a Border Police patrol near the A-Ram junction as it tried to leave Jerusalem. The driver ran the roadblock, but the three were captured when the car overturned, trying to escape another Border Police patrol.

According to the IDF, the three were trying to kidnap a soldier. They had in their possession wigs, talitot, kippot, and other items to disguise themselves as Jews, the army said. They also found a pistol, knives, handcuffs, and an anesthetic.

Security sources said that Hamas has developed a new plan to kidnap soldiers using two vehicles. The first, with a lone driver, is to stop for a soldier - soldiers have long been warned against getting into vehicles with more than one person in them. The first car would drive off, then stop for some reason, and a second car containing more terrorists would pull up and grab the soldier.

The army said that the would-be kidnapers had searched for soldiers at hitchhiking posts and major intersections.

Information from the interrogation of Hamas prisoners, including the gang leaders of the Tzurif cell and the Jerusalem-based Hamas terrorists who were responsible for a bombing at Tel Aviv's central bus station about a year ago, indicated Hamas had made a policy decision to grab soldiers to be used as bargaining chips to win the release of Hamas prisoners.

But the breakthrough revealing the details of the plan came with the November 25 arrests.

Soldiers have been banned from hitchhiking, but this has not deterred the many who find it a quick way to travel. This past week, military police have carried out hundreds of mock kidnappings and fined soldiers who were lured into their cars.

Hamas leaders held a meeting in Gaza last night following the announcement it has been discovered that Hamas planned to abduct soldiers. Dr. Abdul Aziz Rantisi, Dr. Mahmoud Zahar, and Ismail Abu Shanab were among those attending the meeting.

After the meeting, Rantisi said he could not confirm Israel's claims. He added that Hamas sought to release all Palestinian prisoners in Israel. "Imprisoning Palestinians in Israeli prisons is to us the equivalent of murdering them," he said. "To stop the violence, the Zionist enemy must release all Palestinian prisoners."

Margot Dudgevitch and Mohammed Najib contributed to this report.



A Rosh Ha'ayin resident fills a pail with water from an emergency tank yesterday, as the town's water supply was cut off. By last night, Rosh Ha'ayin's water supply and that of the rest of the country was renewed. The Tel Aviv Labor Court later ordered Mekorot's 400 striking employees to resume their posts immediately and to repair all breakdowns. Story, Page 3. (Israel Staff)

Gov't cuts off Histadrut talks

Strike set to continue for third day

By MICHAEL YUDELMAN, BATSHEVA TSUR and DAVID HARRIS

The Treasury last night broke off talks aimed at ending a crippling Histadrut general strike, on the instructions of Attorney-General Elyakim Rubinstein, who said there could be no negotiations with workers who were in contempt of court.

Rubinstein's orders came after the Histadrut, defying back-to-work-orders issued Wednesday and an appeal from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, said it would continue a strike by 700,000 workers for a third day today.

The Histadrut insisted it would continue the job action until a new agreement was signed guaranteeing conditions reached in accords signed in 1996 and 1996.

The State Attorney's Office said it would go back to the Labor Court today to get new back-to-work orders against the strikers.

Schools are to join the strike today and close at 10 a.m., two hours early.

Avraham Ben-Shabbat, secretary-general of the Histadrut Teachers Union, said the schools were shutting early because of poor sanitary conditions caused by the strike. "The lack of cleaning services seriously endangers the health of the pupils and teachers," he said.

back-to-work orders, which they failed to do," the Justice Ministry spokesperson said.

"It is impossible to negotiate at a time when they are in contempt of court, but as soon as the Histadrut decides to honor [the court orders] the negotiations will of course be reopened," the spokesperson said.

President Ezer Weizman renewed efforts last night to get the sides back to the negotiating table, after the talks broke off.

Before the rupture in the talks, Histadrut and Treasury officials were locked in marathon meetings, exchanging position papers.

The Histadrut wants the government to uphold agreements reached in March 1995 and May 1996 regarding pensions. The unions are also worried that privatization plans could bring layoffs and harm benefits.

The government response to the Histadrut strike seemed unusually tough. But Rubinstein acted after the unions ignored his midway appeal, in which he warned that continuing the strike in the face of court orders "could lead to total anarchy."

See STRIKE, Page 12

Albright expects pullback specifics

By NELLE KUTTNER and JAY BUSHINSKY

US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright is expecting Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to offer a package in their Paris meeting today that she can present to Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat tomorrow in Geneva, a senior US administration official said.

While Netanyahu's redeployment plans should be a significant part of the package, the US is also interested in how he will meet a request to put a hold on settlement building, the official added.

Netanyahu, meanwhile, intends to brief Albright about the "principles" guiding the next planned redeployment, without being specific about how much area will be transferred to the PA or evacuated by the IDF.

Netanyahu's presentation is expected to include references to the maps submitted by Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai and Infrastructure Minister Ariel Sharon to the cabinet committee charged with formulating the scope of the pullback, a senior official traveling with the prime minister said.

But Netanyahu will stress that an explicit territorial formula has not yet been agreed on, the official went on.

"If there was a single message sent in the Levy-Abu Mazen meeting [with Albright here last month], it was the criticality of moving on further redeployment," the senior US official said.

"I would see those talks as confirming the importance of moving on this issue," the official said.

"We understand it's difficult for the prime minister, but if you want to get to where the prime minister says he wants to be - final-status [negotiations] - this is what you have to do."

The US wants to get some sense from Netanyahu of both the amount of land he is prepared to concede and a timetable for land transfer to both partial and full PA control, the official said.

US President Bill Clinton met yesterday with Albright and the peace process team.

'False information' affair to be dealt with in court - senior official

By JAY BUSHINSKY

An unnamed individual referred to yesterday by MK Binyamin Ben-Eliezer in a Channel 1 interview was at the center of the "false information" affair that could have plunged Israel into an unnecessary war with Syria.

Ben-Eliezer talked about "a man," while carefully avoiding any other details. Instead, he stressed the former government's sagacity in discounting what turned out to be bogus reports of Syria's purported intention to attack Israel, rather than make peace.

A senior official, in a briefing in conjunction with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's flight to Germany yesterday, said that "whoever it was that submitted the false information did not act on the basis of political motivations."

He refused to divulge if the information had been reported for reasons of prestige or for monetary gain.

"We are referring to a grave phenomenon which is being investigated and which certainly will be dealt with in court," he said.

He praised Mossad head Danny Yatom for his honesty and for having "expunged the unfeigned bread in our midst." By doing so, he went on, Yatom put an end to the flow of false information which had been going on for nearly a decade.

The affair evidently included the receipt of phony intelligence data that related to the movements of Syria's 14th Armored Division in the Mt. Hermon area during the summer and fall of 1996.

Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai, the general staff, and the intelligence establishment regarded the affair with utmost concern.

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Strike empties bank machines

By ELLI WOHLGELERNTER

Is the strike having any effect on your life? Well, you can still get where you're going when the buses are running on a reduced schedule, delay dealing with Bezeq or the post office, wait a few days to get a new passport, or ignore the garbage piling up outside waiting for a pickup.

But if you need cash in hand to pay for something, you need it now, and that's when you can see the real and immediate effects of the strike - it wasn't just banks that were closed yesterday, it was also the automatic teller machines on the street.

And that had people fuming. "This is disgusting," "Low-life scam."

And that was some of the polite things that were overheard yesterday at the corner of Bet Ya'acov and Jaffa streets, at the Discount Bank teller machine right by the Mahaneh Yehuda souk.

People stopping there for money to buy food for Shabbat were desperate: you don't pay by check or Visa in the cash-flow business of the market, where so many transactions are made under five shekels.

"This is very upsetting," said Mirav Etinger, who had come in from Ma'aleh Adumim to do her shopping at Mahaneh Yehuda.

"I'll have to go back home now and go to the supermarket and buy with my Visa card."

"I have a Visa card, but no one here takes it," said Tatianna Berman. "What do I do now?" She thought a second and shrugged her shoulders. "I guess I'll have to go to the corner grocery store and buy on credit."

Others said they would have to borrow cash - "it's the one thing we can do easily in Israel even with a strike" - or ask friends to cash their checks.

Many sighed and took it in stride, just another of life's burdens, although one woman was visibly upset, saying she had no money to get on the bus to go home.

While most moved on to figure out how they were going to buy food for Shabbat, some bystanders were eager to add their comment on the whole strike situation.

"This is all political - it's so transparent," said Yitzhak Ben-Meir. "Everything that's happened in this country in the last year and a half is just to bring down the government of [Prime Minister Binyamin] Netanyahu."

"All this is just to help [Histadrut Secretary-General Amir] Peretz," said Nadav Tzoni. "He told them 'You want me to help you? You have to strike.' So they followed him. For what?"



Police remove a sanitation worker from a pile of garbage during a protest by striking workers in Tel Aviv yesterday. The strike, which started at the beginning of the week, may be nearing its end, as Mayor Ronni Milo and Histadrut Chairman Amir Peretz are expected to sign an agreement tomorrow night regulating garbage collection in the city. (Yael Sorek/Israel Sun)

Court orders Mekorot employees back to work

By MICHAL YUDELMAN and DAVID RUDGE

The Tel Aviv Labor Court yesterday ordered Mekorot's 400 striking employees to resume their posts immediately, to repair all the breakdowns that occurred during the two-day strike, and to report their progress by noon today.

By last night Rosh Ha'ayin's water supply was renewed, after being cut off for two days. Firemen had been distributing water to residents in fire engines. Hadera, the settlements of Gush Etzion, the Golan junction region

in the North, and the Negev's Nevatim and Eilat were also cut off, while Tiberias's sewerage system overflowed into the Kinneret and is polluting the water in the region. The overflow was in an area close to the place where drinking water is pumped, the bathing areas of the Tiberias hot springs and city hotels.

The Health Ministry said that drinking water in the area must be boiled, and that it is forbidden to use drinking fountains there until further notice.

The ministry also ordered increased chlorination of the water

at the Kinneret pumping station and the bathing beaches.

Despite the strike, municipal workers were trying to locate the cause of the breakdown and to fix it under supervision of the district health office.

Hotels around the Dead Sea were also affected by the disruptions.

The Cattle Breeders Association reported that shortages of water, particularly in the Galilee, had caused many cows to suffer miscarriages which could cause serious harm to dairy herds.

Judy Siegel contributed to this report.

Travelers forced to go through Egypt, Jordan

By HAIM SHAPIRO

With her son Zvi's bar mitzva this Shabbat and 17 guests expected to come from abroad, Michelle Freedman was close to tears.

"It's ruined everything for me," she said of the strike which paralyzed the country's airports.

Luckily, she said, the grandparents were already in Israel, but uncles and cousins and friends had found themselves stranded. Last night, some were still making valiant efforts to arrive. An uncle called to say that he and his children would fly to Cairo and then take a taxi to Ra'anana. Other relatives were hoping to come via Amman.

El Al spokesman Nachman Klieman, who said yesterday that the strike has cost the company some \$6 million in lost income, parking and maintenance fees and hotels and food for stranded passengers, reported that six flights were being allowed to land. They were from Vienna, Barcelona, the US and Canada, all with coffins aboard.

There was also a flight from Chicago and New York, diverted to Antalya, with a 75-year-old passenger who had recently undergone open-heart surgery. Another plane allowed to land was a Turkish Airlines flight from Izmir, carrying kidney dialysis patients in need of urgent treatment.

For the country's tourism industry, already in the doldrums, the strike only made things worse. A major tourism conference in Eilat, which was to have been held this weekend, had to be canceled.

"Tourism, which has been in a crisis from the beginning of the year, has received yet another blow," said Avi Rosental, director of the Hotel Association. The conference in Eilat had been planned a year in advance and all the work was going down the drain, he said.

Not only were visitors angry about not being able to get in or get out, he said, the hotels at the Dead Sea were without water as a result of a strike by Mekorot.

Tourism Minister Moshe Kasav said yesterday that the strike was causing tremendous damage to tourism and that those who would suffer were workers in the tourism industry. The ministry said that in light of European regulations, which hold travel agencies financially responsible for ruined vacations, European tour organizers could face a wave of lawsuits.

Moshe Hananel, director of Galilee Tours, termed the cancellation of the Eilat event a major disaster, which could compound the effects of the massacre in Luxor last month. He noted that some 32 charter flights a week are due in Eilat this winter, compared to 44 flights last winter. The conference might have helped to rectify that, he said.

However, Hananel, whose company also represents Royal Jordanian Airlines, had one consolation. With Ben-Gurion Airport blocked, many would-be passengers were coming through Amman, he said. Yesterday, the company organized special bus transport to bring passengers to and from Amman to Israel, he said.

Absorption process comes to a halt

By ALLISON KAPLAN SOMMER

Most citizens had their lives disrupted by the Histadrut general strike in one way or another, but for those who were unlucky enough to choose to immigrate very recently, the paralysis of the nation's bureaucracy brought the process of absorption to a screeching halt.

"I feel completely frustrated and utterly disempowered," said Suzanne Sundry, who, along with her two daughters and husband Rael, immigrated from Johannesburg only two weeks ago.

The couple, both 30, were sitting in a park in Ra'anana in what has become an enforced vacation, with their two daughters, Batsheva, 3, and Michal, 1.

Rael Sundry ticked off a list of the urgent tasks that they were unable to accomplish. "Suzanne is a teacher. She needs to register at the Education Ministry for retraining - they're on strike. I'm a doctor. I need to register with the Health Ministry - they're on strike. All of our worldly possessions have arrived on our lift. They are sitting in Haifa port because they can't be unloaded - the port is on strike. We can't arrange for them to be moved to Jewish Agency storage - the Jewish Agency is on strike. The License Bureau is on strike so we can't get our driver's licenses, without which we can't

purchase a car." Suzanne was most concerned about the fact that her daughter's nursery school in the Ra'anana absorption center, where they are living, was closed due to the strike.

"We had such a hard time adjusting Batsheva; for a week she cried that she didn't like the gan. Well, she finally got used to it, and now it's closed again, and she's sad that she can't go. It's like we took two steps forward and one step back."

They said their Hebrew classes were in operation, but since they and their companions were saddled with their young children, "the classes are in total pandemonium."

Rael said that despite the hardship, they were not reconsidering their decision to move to Israel. Even if they did suddenly choose to return to South Africa, the airport strike would make it impossible to find a flight.

"Of course it raises questions for us, but we wouldn't go back on our decision," he said. "The bottom line, I guess, is that the absorption process takes patience. We just need a little bit more than usual."

In addition to being patient, the Sundrys said they were determined to remain optimistic. Leaning back on the grass in the sunny park, Rael pointed out that "we have to look on the bright side. Not everything is going wrong. At least the weather is beautiful."

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with Matar

December 28, 1997

Annual Family Party in Hebron

Jospin coalition rattled by immigration debate

PARIS (Reuters) - The French parliament yesterday launched a bitter debate over the left-wing government's second immigration bill in a row that could weaken widespread support for Socialist Prime Minister Lionel Jospin.

Both the center-right opposition and some in the government's own leftist majority have harshly criticized the legislation aimed at softening headline laws governing foreigners' entry into France and their right to stay on French soil.

The bill, the third to reform immigration laws in the last five years, will be debated for nine days and is not due to go to a vote until December 16.

Some 40 speeches are scheduled before the National Assembly begins examining the 1,700 amendments proposed so far.

The assembly last Saturday approved government legislation

aimed at restoring automatic French citizenship to those born on French soil of foreign parents, a right that had been taken away by the previous conservative government.

Interior Minister Jean-Pierre Chevènement, who drafted the bill being taken up yesterday, said it had three fundamental goals.

They were "to stabilize the situation of legal immigrants and reintegrate them, if they so desire, into the republic; to reaffirm France's openness to the world... and finally, to control the influx of immigrants while respecting foreigners' rights."

With unemployment sticking stubbornly over 12 percent, opinion polls consistently find that most French adults favour a hard-line approach on immigration.

Political analysts say France's deep divisions over immigration

TOKYO (Reuters) - A landmark conference on curbing greenhouse gas emissions bubbled with toil and trouble yesterday when the European Union (EU) slammed host Japan for not negotiating fairly.

In exchanges also involving the US, the biggest players in the global warming debate let down their diplomatic guard in pressing their cases for what should be done.

The exchanges ranged over political systems in the US and EU, who is winning the public relations battle, and interpretation of terms like "bubble" and "sinks," phrases incomprehensible to the layman.

More than 160 countries are meeting in this ancient Japanese city until December 10 to discuss ways to curb a series of gases scientists say threaten to cause changes to global climate in the form of warmer temperatures, more violent storms, rising sea levels and a melting of polar ice.

Business leaders worry the cost of curbing the gases would stifle economic growth and threaten jobs by imposing needs for fuel and other energy efficiencies.

CLIMATE SUMMIT

The Clinton-Santer meeting can be saved and an agreement reached.

The term that fit the fuse in Kyoto on the fourth day of the meeting was the EU's so-called "bubble," under which it proposes cutting gases by 15 percent from 1990 levels for the bloc as a whole, a plus that infuriates the US and Japan because it allows some individual EU nations to increase their emissions.

The US proposes just stabilizing emissions at 1990 levels while Japan wants a five percent reduction.

Japan questioned the fairness of the 15-country bloc's plan to share emission cuts between its richer and poorer members to achieve a collective target.

Luxembourg's ambassador to Japan, Pierre Gramagna, the current EU delegation head, found the suggestion unacceptable.

"We cannot understand that the host country is leading this offensive, because we think the host country should be more of a broker here to achieve agreement," Gramagna said. "In this particular question, that's not the case and we find that extremely regrettable."

Most delegates believe that with the conference hopelessly split over a host of issues, only by political intervention such as in

advantage which it should pay for in the form of higher cuts in emissions.

"Everybody recognizes that by taking joint action to reduce emissions, the EU member countries can have advantages which are not accorded as non-EU countries," Tanabe told reporters.

Under the EU deal, thrashed out in principle by its environmental ministers last March, action would range from a 30% cut by Luxembourg to a 40% rise by Portugal.

Denmark, Germany, Austria, Belgium, Britain, Italy, and the Netherlands; would also make cuts; France and Finland would freeze emissions at 1990 levels. Sweden, Ireland, Spain, and Greece would have emission rises.

US delegation head Melinda Kimble said her country does not object to the EU proposal in principle, but she raised similar queries to those of the Japanese.

"I am not disputing the constitutional principle behind having a bubble, but that's no reason not to have transparency and accountability," she said.

Since the conference started on Monday, the EU and US have sniped at each other over how dramatic gas cuts should be.

The "bubble" was another opportunity.

"I fail to see why it would be cheaper to introduce fuel efficiency in Europe rather than in Japan and the United States," an EU spokesman said.

Westminster rejects Sinn Fein benefits bid

LONDON (Reuters) - Two Sinn Fein leaders elected to the British Parliament last May failed yesterday to win the right to use its facilities without taking their seats.

Speaker Betty Boothroyd turned

refused on principle to take their seats in Parliament and swear an oath of loyalty to Queen Elizabeth.

But they say they are entitled to the same benefits as other members, such as House of Commons passes.

"There are facilities here that would allow us to better represent those who elected us. We have the right to those facilities," Adams said as he walked into the Gothic 19th century building.

When he came out half an hour later, he said the meeting with Boothroyd was quite cordial and friendly.

"Unfortunately the speaker did not take the opportunity to reverse her decision taken in May," he said.

Adams said a legal challenge to the ruling in the European Court of Human Rights would continue.

The Sinn Fein leader will be back in London next week for an unprecedented meeting with

Prime Minister Tony Blair.

Asked why the Sinn Fein members would not take their seats, he replied: "I'm an Irish republican. My allegiance and that of Martin McGuinness and more importantly the allegiance of the people who voted for us is to the people of Ireland."

He said the failure to reach a compromise was "part of the old knee-jerk agenda. I think it shows she sees people in Northern Ireland as second class citizens. It shows once again in relation to Ireland that British democracy does not work."

However, Boothroyd defended her ruling. "My decision does not discriminate against Sinn Fein: it applies equally to any members not taking their seats for any reason," she said in a statement.

"Those who do not take up their democratic responsibilities cannot have access to the facilities at Westminster that are made available to assist members who do."

With deep sorrow, we announce the passing of our beloved mother and grandmother

Prof. ELAINE BERMAN

The funeral will take place today, Friday, December 5, 1997, leaving from Shangar Funeral Home at 12 noon for Har Hazeitim.

Daughter and son-in-law, Susie and Shimon Fisher
 Son and daughter-in-law, Stephen and Nurit Berman
 Son and daughter-in-law, David and Orit Berman
 Grandchildren, Tal, Maya, Imri, Shimrit, Hadar, Amir, Naama, Nimrod
 Shiva: 10 Aliyat Hanoar, Ramot, Jerusalem

We sadly mourn the death of

Peter Ungerleider

President of the Dorot Foundation

Ruth Ostrin Philip Warburg

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With great sorrow, we express our deepest sympathy on the passing of

Rabbi MORDECHAI SHAPIRO ז"ל

Dr. Yitzhak and Ahuva Retter
 Miami Beach, FL

We will mark the first *yahrzeit* of our beloved husband, father and grandfather

SAM FRIDE ז"ל

on Monday, December 8, 1997 (9 Kislev) at 3:30 p.m., at the Herziya cemetery (Pinsker St.).

The Family

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 Son & Daughter-in-law: I. Leon and Jacqueline Glassgold
 Son & Daughter-in-law: Alfred and Irene Glassgold
 Grandchildren: Lori and Larry Gibson and family, Marc Glassgold, Eric Glassgold, Jill Glassgold, Judith Neshanic

The unveiling of the tombstone of our beloved

CORNELIA (KAY) LÖWENDORFF-DE HAAFF

will take place on Friday, December 12, 1997 - 6th Kislev 5758 at 11.00 a.m., at the Herziya Cemetery, Rechov Pinsker, Herziya

We will meet at the entrance to the cemetery

M. Dultscher
 E.Y. Spler

NATO: No plans for North Africa force

BRUSSELS (Reuters) - NATO yesterday denied a newspaper report that it had contingency plans for a future peacekeeping operation commanded from Spain that could deploy thousands of troops in neighboring North Africa.

"At this point there is no contingency plan at all that relates to North African countries or projecting force to North African countries," an official NATO source told Reuters.

"Furthermore NATO has not yet agreed on any force structure for the headquarters, no force levels have been assigned yet," said the official, who called the Spanish newspaper report "speculative."

She was commenting on a report in the *El Mundo* newspaper saying one possible future task for the new Joint Sub-Regional Command in Madrid would be to

On the first *yahrzeit* of our beloved husband, brother, father, grandfather and great-grandfather

Rabbi LEONARD OSCHRY ז"ל

we will gather on Tuesday, December 9, 1997 (10 Kislev) at Har Hamenuhot (section *mem-hef*), Jerusalem.
 We will meet at the entrance at 10 a.m.
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We mourn the passing of

IRENE WINTER ז"ל

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She will be especially remembered by the thousands of children with whom she shared her extraordinary talents and love of Eretz Yisrael.

יחי זכרה ברוך

Bnei Akiva of North America Camp Moshava

The Jerusalem Foundation

mourns the loss of a dear friend

PHILIP BERMAN

and offers its sincere sympathies to

Muriel and the family.



Bosnian fashions

A model wears a dress from the 'Knitting Together Nations' collection presented at UNESCO headquarters in Paris on Wednesday. The collection was made by women in Bosnia, whose handiwork is designed to help the refugees help themselves. (AP)

Russia to charge American held for spying

MOSCOW (Reuters) - Russia will today press charges against a 29-year-old American telecommunications engineer detained on suspicion of spying, an official said yesterday.

A spokesman for the Federal Security Service (FSB) said Richard Bliss, who was arrested in the southern Russian city of Rostov-on-Don on November 25, would face espionage charges, but he did not give details.

Roman Dyukarev, a spokesman for employer Qualcomm, said a representative of the US Embassy in Moscow was due in Rostov today, and said Bliss's attorney was expected to be present when charges were made.

The FSB said on Monday Bliss had carried out long-distance topographical surveys with what it called illegally-imported satellite receivers and obtained secret information about unspecified "restricted" buildings in the Rostov area.

A spokesman for the US Embassy in Moscow said Bliss was "certainly not" a spy.

A resident of San Diego who did not speak Russian,

Bliss had been in Russia just over a month when he was detained, Dyukarev said. His job was to install and test a wireless communications system in Rostov.

He is not married, but unspecified family members said in a statement that they were concerned by his plight.

"This was Richard's first trip to Russia and we are surprised and concerned that he is being detained against his will," they said.

Qualcomm, a San Diego-based maker of wireless communications gear, is working on projects in Chelyabinsk, Rostov and Moscow, and in October announced the launch of a high-tech \$5.8 million wireless network in Rostov.

"Qualcomm is absolutely keen to continue doing business with Russia and these plans did not change. There are on-going difficulties though," Dyukarev said.

The company said Bliss, who is now held at FSB headquarters in Rostov, had not knowingly committed any crime.

A second Qualcomm employee, one of three the company has with Bliss in Rostov, was detained on November 25 briefly and then released.

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NEWS in FOCUS

From suburban dream to battleground

The fistfights last week between residents of Pardess Hanna were the latest stage in a turf war that makes some believe that 'partition' is the only solution to the secular-religious conflict, Dan Izenberg reports

Neveh Rotem, a small development of two-story, semi-detached private homes, green lawns and bricked sidewalks tucked away in a corner of Pardess Hanna, is yesterday's secular Israeli dream turned into today's nightmare.

Some 80 secular families who thought they had found their corner of paradise as they moved into Neveh Rotem over the past nine months, have suddenly found themselves in a turf war with haredi Rabbi Raphael Bublil and his followers in the Even Hahaim organization.

"We wanted our own house at a reasonable price. Where else could we have found this?" said Neveh Rotem resident Nava Ksas Neoran.

"Everyone is mortgaged up to his ears. They bought their homes with the sweat of their brow. Most are young couples. For three years, they dreamed of the day they would actually live here. Finally, they moved in and began cultivating their gardens. And now ... this."

That's precisely the way Barzilai sees it.

"Remez is a distressed neighborhood," he said. "They ought to know where they bought their homes. They didn't buy in Caesarea or Savyon."

The residents of Neveh Rotem, on the other hand, see themselves as belonging to a self-contained, homogeneous neighborhood of like-minded individuals sharing their own values and customs within the larger, compatible framework of Pardess Hanna.

But the situation is even more complicated than that. Whatever motivations may drive Bublil privately, he is affiliated with Shas, which perceives its key mission as one of "redeeming" the Sephardi population which has allegedly been corrupted and exploited by the Ashkenazi, secular elite ever since immigrating to Israel. That is why Bublil believes that the Remez neighborhood, and those who live in it, "belong" to him.

"This neighborhood is in need of those who will help bring it back to Judaism," he explained.



The ongoing confrontations in Neveh Rotem finally erupted into a fist-swinging brawl last week, when the haredim and their neighborhood supporters traded blows with secular residents.

WHEN BUBLIL and the residents of Neveh Rotem look at their neighbors in Remez, they see two different entities.

The residents of Neveh Rotem perceive essentially modern Israelis, more or less like themselves. They may or may not mix with them, but they have no problem living in proximity to them. And that is what they thought when they decided to buy into Neveh Rotem.

What they did not know was that an ambitious and dynamic haredi rabbi had serious intentions of turning these modern-looking Israelis into haredim or as close to haredim as possible. Bublil unilaterally regards the residents of Remez as strictly Orthodox Jews by right, and his mission is to turn them into strictly Orthodox Jews de facto.

To accomplish this, he wants to import as many "real" haredim as possible into the area, to establish a strong nucleus which will help, as his followers put it, "raise the level" of the indigenous population.

One of these "real" haredim is Nathan Weiss, a member of Bublil's kollel and a haredi trouble-shooter.

"Where I lived, the spiritual situation was already very high," said Weiss. "I came here to strengthen the local population. The Remez neighborhood was known as a drug neighborhood. Rabbi Bublil extracted the boys here from drugs."

"I came from Bnei Brak. Afterwards, I was in Yeroham and now in Pardess Hanna. My job is to be an activist."

"Let's take drugs, for example. As soon as there is a kollel, it automatically attracts addicts. They are drawn by the spiritual way because it can solve so many problems. When a man is bored, he can easily get caught up in crime or drugs. This way, he is busy all the time."

OF COURSE, Bublil, who was raised in Pardess Hanna and married the daughter of the village's former chief rabbi, sees things differently.

Eleven years ago, he established a small kollel, called Even Hahaim, in the Remez quarter, a poor, Sephardi neighborhood of small houses on the edge of Pardess Hanna. Later he opened a small Talmud Torah primary school.

Geographically, Neveh Rotem is a continuation of Remez. A neighborhood street separates the southern edge of Remez from the northern edge of Neveh Rotem, which is surrounded on its three other sides by open fields and orchards. Bublil does not distinguish between the two areas.

"Neveh Rotem isn't a neighborhood," he said. "It's a location within Remez." And Remez, as he sees it, "is a neighborhood of traditional Jews. From the beginning of our work here, we tried to rehabilitate adolescents involved in crime and drugs. And we will continue our efforts to bring back those who have strayed from the faith, because this is a religious neighborhood."

Pardess Hanna local council head Shalom Barzilai supports Bublil's view that Neveh Rotem is not a separate entity.

"Neveh Rotem is in the southwest part of Remez," he said. "It was only the building contractor who decided to call the development by a different name."

Borders and semantics are important in this dispute, because if Neveh Rotem is part of Remez, then its residents are the newcomers on a block which has, over the years, and due to its own particular demographic makeup, developed its own set of customs and code of existence.

Bublil set his sights on four empty plots of land in, or adjacent to, Remez. Two of the plots, according to existing town planning schemes, were designated for a total of 150 homes, a third for commercial purposes and the fourth for an unspecified public institution.

The first of the two housing plots eventually became Neveh Rotem. Bublil had wanted to market these homes and began negotiating with Shikun Ovdim, which had first contractual rights, and later with Tel Aviv contractor Mario-Leznik, which eventually built the project. According to Bublil, Mario-Leznik abruptly decided to sell on the

open market in the middle of negotiations with him.

But Bublil succeeded in signing a contract with Shikun Ovdim, giving him first chance at finding 40 purchasers for the homes in the second plot of land, located inside Remez. Shikun Ovdim also gave Bublil the right to develop the third site, a 700-square-meter plot offering some 350 square meters of commercial floor space.

The linchpin of Bublil's dream is the plot of land designated for a public institution. Upon it, Bublil has declared, he hopes to build an educational complex that would include day creches, kindergartens, separate girls' and boys' primary schools, a high school and library. This would be the drawing card for the dozens of haredi families he wants to attract.

IN AUGUST, the city engineer of Pardess Hanna, in a handwritten message, informed Bublil that the city was giving him the plot, for the specific purpose of building a primary school.

According to Yaki Levinz, a member of the local council and chairman of the town's education department, Bublil's earlier requests for the land had been rejected on the grounds that he did not have enough children to warrant a school.

"We checked the school and found he had about 12 children," said Levinz.

But Bublil persisted. After years of operating independently, he linked up with Shas, which in June submitted a request to Barzilai on the letterhead of Ma'ayan Hahinuch Hatorani (Shas's educational system). This time, the request was granted.

Although Shas made it clear that Bublil wanted to build a large regional educational center with many additional functions for a population which did not yet exist, Barzilai defended his decision to allocate the land to Bublil on the grounds that it was needed for primary education for the children of Remez.

In September, even though the land still belonged to the Israel Lands Administration and Bublil had not received permission to put up structures on the site, he brought in three mobile homes — an illegal act — and moved the children in. He also put up a sign declaring: "Here on this site, with God's help, we will build an educational complex."

Rotem. In one of them, he set up a real-estate office. The sign there also announces that applicants may register their children for the "day creches and kindergartens, the boys' primary school, the girls' primary school, the yeshiva and the kollel."

On the small commercial plot, Bublil erected a sign saying that a "haredi shopping mall" would be erected on the site.

SO FAR, Bublil has rented 18 homes from their absentee secular owners in Neveh Rotem and managed to rent eight of them to haredi families, according to Ksas Neoran. In September, he moved

and so moral that we don't even know how to cope with these people," she said. "It took a long time before people here were ready to fight back. We're all bleeding hearts. We didn't want anyone to think we were anti-religious."

The secular residents regard the opening of the kollel inside Neveh Rotem as a deliberate provocation. It was done without a permit — Bublil's second blatantly illegal move.

"If my neighbor, even before we start talking, starts up with illegal actions, I don't care who he is," said Michael Rafelson, another resident. "I don't want such a neighbor."

"I was once talking to one of the haredim and brought out my book on the town planning laws. He said 'that book is for you, not for us. We have a different law.'"

The next serious incident took place on Succot, when the members of Even Hahaim built a large succa and celebrated the holiday with loud singing into the night.

That incident launched the war of the loudspeakers. The secular residents set up a protest site every Saturday morning, where they welcomed out-of-town supporters and aimed their music-blasting loudspeakers at Bublil's synagogue during prayers.

"A synagogue is not meant to be located in a private house in the middle of the neighborhood," said Ksas Neoran. "If he puts it there, we will do everything we can to disturb him. What he has done bothers us terribly and the only thing we can do is strike at his soft underbelly."

'We will continue our efforts to bring back those who have strayed from the faith, because this is a religious neighborhood'

- Rabbi Bublil

'It took a long time before people here were ready to fight back. We didn't want anyone to think we were anti-religious'

- Nava Ksas Neoran

'Just like you don't smoke cigarettes in a gas station, we must not mix secular and haredi Jews'

- Yaki Levinz

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"They want to establish a haredi neighborhood in the only entrance and exit we have from our neighborhood," said Ksas Neoran. "If he succeeds, he will block off our neighborhood, close us off and, in effect, force us to leave. As soon as they are in the majority, they will take control and tell us how to dress and when we can move."

At the moment, two developments are in the offing which might have a decisive effect on the dispute.

The local council recently passed a resolution rescinding the decision to give Bublil the land for a public institution. Bublil has appealed the ruling and the case is in court. If Bublil is unable to build his educational complex, it is unlikely that he will be able to create the haredi nucleus he wants.

Meanwhile, his contract with Shikun Ovdim for the 40 apartments is almost up. Shikun Ovdim's Duvdevani said there is no sign Bublil has found 40 purchasers. If he doesn't, Shikun Ovdim will put the units back on the open market, Duvdevani said.

ALTHOUGH SOME of Bublil's actions in connection with the dispute are questionable, the local council head said that he was acting out of a profound social belief.

"The problem can only be solved through the goodwill of both sides and a genuine desire to live together," he said. "This is a battle based on the false view that the haredim should live in ghettos. I can't tell anyone where to live. I can seek compromise and conciliation but I can't expel anyone. I was brought up to believe that the people of Israel should live together in peace."

Local council member Levinz, who at first voted to grant Bublil the school, then led the fight to revoke the decision, said he changed his mind after witnessing the actions of the haredim in Neveh Rotem and after coming to the conclusion that they want to "conquer" the new neighborhood.

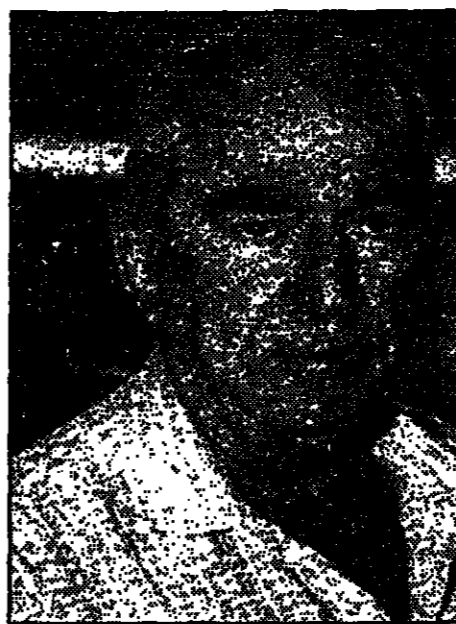
"When I voted for the school, I didn't understand that Bublil would use the move against us," he said. "We didn't understand that the move could lead to bloodshed. Just like you don't smoke cigarettes in a gas station, we must not mix secular and haredi Jews."



Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert



Herzliya Mayor Eli Landau



Agriculture and Environment Minister Rafael Eitan



Finance Minister Yashkov Neeman



Labor MK Avi Yehzekel

Why are they off the hook?

Last week's acquittal of Labor MK Avi Yehzekel on charges that he misused Histadrut funds was, for state prosecutors, one more drop of the Chinese water torture that they have endured for the last two years. One after another, public officials indicted for white-collar crimes, usually corruption-related, are being found not guilty in court.

The list of Yehzekel's recent, prominent predecessors is long: Former Jewish Agency chairman Simcha Diniz; Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert; Finance Minister Yashkov Neeman; Agriculture and Environment Minister Rafael Eitan; Herzliya Mayor Eli Landau; former Haifa mayor Arye Gurek; former Petah Tikva mayor Giora Lev; former Eilat mayor Rafi Hochman; former Northern District police commander Ya'acov Ganot. And if David Appel, a contractor and hugely powerful political wheeler-dealer, can be considered a public figure — him too.

"This is not good for the Jews," says attorney Michael Partem, deputy chairman of the Movement for Quality Government in Israel, which initiates frequent court actions against suspected corrupt officials.

What seems to be overlooked these days, though, is that list of politicians and public figures who have been convicted of white-collar crimes over the last couple of years is also long: former Beit Sheshesh mayor Shalom Fedids; former

That's what some critics are asking. But others questions why these public officials were ever brought to court in the first place. MK Avi Yehzekel's acquittal last week has revived the debate, as Larry Derfner reports

Ramat Gan mayor Uri Amir; current Ramat Gan Mayor Zvi Bar; former Ramat Hasharon mayor Moshe Verbin; former Rishon LeZion mayor Meir Nitzan; former Gedera mayor Shalom Cohen; and Hapoel Sports Organization chairman Yoram Oberkowitz.

The most recent conviction was that of former MK Yossi Vanunu on corruption charges stemming from his tenure as local council head of Kiryat Malachi. In the past, the conviction of a politician received more public and media attention than an acquittal. Now, popular perceptions, as reflected in media coverage, have changed to an "absurd" extent, says legal commentator Moshe Negbi. Vanunu's conviction was quickly noted and forgotten, Negbi says, while every acquittal is treated to the spotlight.

If the public once assumed that an indicted politician was probably guilty, today many Israelis see

quash their respective appointments as minister of justice and minister of internal security.

Hoter-Yishai maintains that his own indictment is utterly baseless, and was served against him as punishment for his harsh criticisms of Supreme Court President Aharon Barak, and as an attempt to remove him from the leadership of the Bar Association.

As for the string of acquittals, Hoter-Yishai says: "I have no doubt that if God forbid, one of the arms of the defense establishment suffered such a series of failures, there would be a demand for a commission of inquiry. Unfortunately, the [State Attorney's Office's] procedures have not been examined by an outside, neutral authority."

State Attorney Edna Arbel, Attorney General Elyakim Rubinstein and his predecessor, Michael Ben-Yair dismiss all accusations that they entertained any political or non-legal considerations in bringing indictments against public officials.

Partem of the Movement for Quality Government points out that in a number of these cases, the court decision noted that there had been sufficient evidence to warrant an indictment. He says he knows of no public figure who has been indicted for political reasons, although, in his view, there have been public officials who have escaped indictment because of such considerations.

Still, so many public officials have been exonerated in court lately that the most perplexing question of all is: Why?

Partem says that among those in the legal profession, "There is a general feeling that the courts may be easing up a little on their standards [for acquittal]. It may be that the pendulum is swinging back — that some judges feel the courts were too severe in the past on white-collar crime and malfeasance by public officials, and that now they're leaning towards the attitude that the public official is also a human being who deserves more of a benefit of the doubt."

Partem and Negbi also point out that politicians and public figures are often wealthy and can hire the best lawyers and investigators, who can put more time and energy into a case than can the State Attorney's Office's overworked prosecutors. The problem is not that the state prosecutors are less able than their adversaries, Negbi stresses, rather that they lack the defense's frequently extravagant resources with which to mount a case.

Hoter-Yishai, however, insists that the root of the problem is that state prosecutors have become "arrogant," and are attempting to use the courts to make laws, which is the sole legitimate province of the Knesset. "Over the years the State Attorney's Office has attempted to establish new norms by pushing the courts towards passing judgment in areas which have more to do with values [pertaining to the conduct of public officials] than with law," he charges.

Yet another pressing question raised by the acquittals is what effect they are having on efforts of the State Attorney's Office to bring suspected corrupt officials to trial.

Arbel insists they are having no effect. "We cannot make decisions according to the [public] mood of the hour. In principle we will not change our policy. When we become convinced that there is a public interest or there is sufficient evidence, we will present an indictment," she declared recently.

However, after Yehzekel's acquittal, prosecutors were quoted off-the-record as saying that in the future they will be reluctant to issue indictments of public figures.

Negbi says he fears that such remarks are nearer the mark than Arbel's. State prosecutors now are under tremendous "psychological pressure," he says, and seem intimidated by the possibility of losing another high-profile case.

This pressure has already taken effect, he continues. The State



Former Petah Tikva mayor Giora Lev



Former Jewish Agency chairman Simcha Diniz



Former Eilat Mayor Rafi Hochman

Attorney's Office has declined to appeal a number of acquittals of public figures to higher courts. The Magistrate's Court, the lowest Israeli court, whose decisions can be appealed to the District Court and then to the High Court of Justice, has in many cases "become the final arbiter of the norms pertaining to public figures in Israel," Negbi says. "With all due respect to the Magistrate's Court, the prosecution should pursue such cases all the way."

Partem says he "would like to hope that the State Attorney's Office will not be covered into taking a more passive role" in public corruption matters. On the other hand, he suggests that the string of acquittals "will require the State Attorney's Office to tighten its evidentiary standards, to try to be more certain that when it decides to indict someone, the indictment is based on very, very sound evidence." In all, Partem says, the series of high-profile acquittals undoubtedly damages the State Attorney's Office's ability to fight alleged public corruption in Israel.

But he adds: "The damage is not irreparable." Nothing, let's say, that a few more good convictions in the near future couldn't fix.

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סוכן מן הארץ

Unwanted neighbors

The three Arab women whose Jerusalem apartment was firebombed on Sunday are caught in the middle. They are too independent for their own community, and the Jewish one has violently rejected them, Dan Izenberg writes

Except for the smoke stains above the front door — evidence of the second attempt in six weeks to kill them — the apartment of the three Arab women from Galilee, Manal Diab, and Sonya and Wafa Khoury, looks like any home of young, spirited people.

The sun-filled living room is full of plants and flowers, family photos are pinned to the bulletin board, two bookcases are lined with Hebrew and Arabic books and cassette tapes, and plastic covers still protect the seats of the new dining-room set. It's hard to believe that such an unpretentious home with so many signs of love and life could attract hatred so great as to wish to destroy it, at the risk of killing its inhabitants.

After a long search, Diab and the Khoury sisters managed last July to find an apartment on the top floor of a building located in the Jewish neighborhood of Musrara, at the very edge of the seam that used to separate east and west Jerusalem. From their balcony, the women can easily see the domes of the Aksa and Omar mosques.

A day after the second firebombing, which took place earlier this week, an angry Diab carted a heap of cardboard boxes up the narrow staircase to the fourth-floor apartment. Some men, who saw the boxes and understood that she was packing up, began laughing at her. "That's it? You're leaving?" they mocked.

Their meanness, on top of the murderous malevolence of the firebombings, was too much for her, and she burst into tears.

"I've lived in Jerusalem for seven years," said the 26-year-old former resident of Tamra. "In all that time, nothing like this has ever happened to me. I'm not leaving this apartment because I'm giving up. If I had my own home and a profession, if I were economically stable, I would have no problem staying and fighting.

"But I'm just starting life and I have so much to do. I need to grow and develop. I don't have time to waste on this nonsense."

Despite Manal's momentary

despair, however, the women have not, in fact, decided what to do.

"I'm vacillating," said Sonya Khoury. "If we stay here, it means taking total responsibility for our lives. Maybe we should leave and forget about everything that happened. But that would be hard. I so, so badly want the police to apprehend the arsonists.

"If we leave, this type of thing will continue and there won't be an end to it. By staying, we will be fighting for our rights. But staying means putting our lives at some risk. It's a very difficult decision."

Whoever is after them seems determined to force them out. The apartment had previously been firebombed on October 13. This past Sunday, at 4 a.m., a small explosive went off in a bucket outside their apartment door. One of the women then noticed a suspicious package in the hallway and called police; the package in fact contained a second bomb, and a policeman suffered minor burns while attempting to dismantle it.

DIAB, DRESSED in tight slacks and sweater, looks tough on the outside, but her tears and chain-smoking reveal how hurt she is. Khoury has a softer look to her. But both are fiercely independent and determined women who are enraged at the treatment they have received from Jewish Jerusalemites during their years in the city. The arson attempts may constitute a different, more dangerous, level of hostility, but it is not uncharacteristic of their experiences, they said.

For example, it is almost impossible for them to rent an apartment. After the first arson attempt, the landlord ordered them to vacate

and gave them a month's notice. Over the next six weeks, they responded to 30 ads and were turned down in all but two of them.

"In one case, we went to see an apartment in French Hill," said Diab. "The man was so afraid we were terrorists that he kept looking around the room to make sure one of us wouldn't attack him."

"It came to the point where I was ashamed to say I was an Arab," said Khoury.

Housing isn't the only problem. Khoury said she has also had trouble finding a job.

"As a student, the only work I could get was in hotels, because Arabs can work on Fridays and Saturdays. Afterwards, I was turned down for many jobs for which I was qualified.

"Once, I went to one of the health funds. The woman asked

me if I could word process. I said yes. She asked if I could touch-type. I said no, but that I type quickly. She said it's okay, you have the job.

"Then I told her that I was an Arab and asked if it was still okay. Without skipping a beat, she replied: 'Ah, but we need someone who knows how to touch-type. Sorry.'"

The only easily available full-time jobs for Arabs are in the support services where the pay is low and Jews do not want to work, she continued.

Khoury said that growing up in Nazareth, she had little awareness of what it meant to be an Arab in a predominantly Jewish society. It was at the Hebrew University that she learned about her status and the status of her people, and in Jewish Jerusalem where she experienced it.

"When I walk down Jaffa Street, or in the Mashbir Lazarchan department store, I feel that I'm not wanted," she said. "If I speak Arabic, people move away from me. They must think we're primitive, or have horns or something.

"I don't know where they get these ideas. I don't want to remind the Jews about what happened to them in Europe. It's very hard to be rejected all the time. They were also rejected in Europe."

Khoury said she has relations of affection and mutual respect with some Jews — at work, for example — but no close friends among them.

"I feel that I am being hurt all the time. If there is a true peace and I no longer feel that the Israelis are tormenting me and my people, I will have no problem being friends with Jews. But the way things are, I see how racist they are towards us, and what is

going on in the territories, it is hard for me."

DESPITE THESE difficulties, Diab, a clerk in west Jerusalem, and Khoury, who works in the tourist industry, have no intention of leaving Jerusalem. For these independent women, the homes of their childhood are no alternative.

"Jerusalem is a big city, it's more open," said Khoury. "Here I can develop more in work, in everything."

Behind that surprising statement — given her experiences — is the credo of a young Arab woman fighting for her autonomy against the traditional society in which she grew up.

"It's not easy to be an Arab woman," she said. "When I grew up, I began to rebel against the traditional concept of the Arab woman's place. And I'm still rebelling."

"A couple of years ago I had a ferocious argument with my uncle. I thought my father was going to faint. But I argued back and didn't flinch. My father got mad at me but I told him I'll say whatever I want."

"There are a few women like me. Some of them couldn't take it any more and gave in. Others never married. But I am with them and support them and hope that those girls who are not fighting will understand that we are fighting for our daughters and for their daughters. We don't want to live the old way any more. I will go where I want when I want. It's my life."

The seemingly obvious answer to the women's housing dilemma would be to rent in east Jerusalem. But they have tried it and found that it has its own problems.

"If there were a reasonable place to live in east Jerusalem, with bus routes and banks, I would have no problem living among my people," said Diab, her eyes flashing. "But you know what things are like there. The authorities allow drugs to flourish and want to kill everyone. What do they think? That they'll kill me, too?" Khoury added that they had lived for one year in the Beit Hanina area in east Jerusalem, but that "the Arab men also found it hard to accept us because of our independent ways. They would whistle at us and curse us."

ACCORDING TO Eyad Mahameed, the former head of the Hebrew University's unofficial Arab Student Committee and a fourth-year law student, about 450 Arab students live off campus, including a large number of freshmen aged 18-19, who were accepted to the university after the dormitory application date expired.

Mahameed, the son of Hadash MK Hashem Mahameed, said that for each of the past two years, he spent two months looking for lodging. Among the many who turned him down were a large number of Jewish students who had advertised on campus for roommates.

"Every time I applied, I was interrogated," said Mahameed. "I could see they were upright. They wanted to get out of this situation somehow. They would say they'd get back to me in a day or two, but never call. Or if they did call, they would say the room had already been rented. In one case, I had a Jewish friend call up afterwards. He was told the room was still available.

"When I talked to someone on the phone we'd always come to that point where they would ask: 'What's your name?' When I told them, you could hear them suck in their breath. You could tell they



"If there were a reasonable place to live in east Jerusalem, with bus routes and banks, I would have no problem living among my people," says Manal Diab



"It's not easy to be an Arab woman," says Sonya Khoury. "When I grew up, I began to rebel against the traditional concept of the Arab woman's place. And I'm still rebelling. We don't want to live the old way any more. I will go where I want, when I want. It's my life"

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MIDDLE ISRAEL



By AMOTZ ASA-EL

'Govern!' ordered the dying Cardinal Jules Mazarin. 'Govern, and let the politicians serve, rather than master you.'

The chief minister's sting

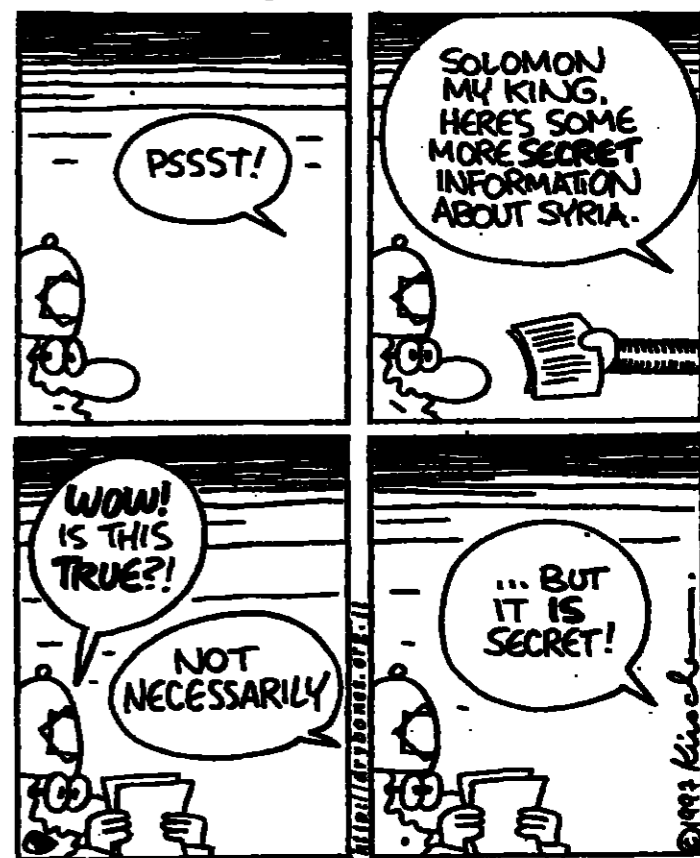
scholarly and soft-spoken chief minister seemed to be the right man in the right place. Not that he would carry out the equivalent of ending the bloody Thirty Years War or enlisting Oliver Cromwell in order to defeat Spain - as Mazarin had - but the political tax expert Neeman did offer a refreshing antithesis to the dreary congregation of career politicians, retired generals and small-time sycophants who traditionally populated Israeli cabinets.

largest-ever privatization - was finalized by Neeman. And when he elegantly led the first reading in the Knesset of next year's budget, veteran pundits concluded that Yaakov Neeman had become a force to contend with, a consigliere whose power paradoxically stemmed from the powerlessness of a partyless non-MK.

legislative branches. Among his goals were the appointments of non-politicians as senior ministers, establishing national security and economic councils led by professional non-politicians, and forcing cabinet members to forfeit their Knesset seats to the next in line on the party list through the so-called Norwegian Law.

may have been worth the hefty price it imposed on a distraught public. Professional non-politicians would be a welcome change in Israeli cabinets, since they would spend less of their time weighing, accumulating and sporting their power. But even so, they would have to follow the guidance of their elected leader. Instead, Neeman's shot from the hip, like his arrival at the Treasury, was haphazard, and did nothing but further complicate an already intolerably besieged prime minister's life.

Dry Bones



SHABBAT SHALOM



By SHLOMO RISKIN

'And Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him. And when Jacob saw them he said: 'This is God's camp,' and he called the name of that place Mahanaim.'

Valuing one's own worth

Pesach Weizman

We can hardly blame young Jacob for desperately wanting to win his father's love. And we can even understand his feeling that the way to achieve that love was by amassing material possessions; after all, the favored Esau was a hunter. We can even rationalize the use of deceit to acquire those possessions because the Torah hints that deceptiveness was second nature to Esau - 'the hunt' or entrapment, in his mouth' can also be taken to mean that Esau was fork-tongued.

Where would a middle-aged Jacob, replete with responsibility for a retinue of four wives and children, find the courage to leave the comfort of a successful business and relative security for a barren land where his brother Esau is waiting to demand remuneration for the stolen blessing?

One thing is certain: such an act of bravery requires a strong sense of self. One message the Bible conveys - albeit from reading between the lines - is that real self-confidence cannot come from material possessions alone. Unless the individual is comfortable with who he is, as opposed to defining himself by what he has, he will never be able to withstand life's tests, temptations and tragedies.

As our Sages teach: 'R. Yohanan and R. Elazar both said: When an individual is dependent on other human beings, his face changes like a Kroom... What is a 'Kroom'? When Rav Dimi came, he said: 'There is a bird in the cities on the other side of the sea, and its name is Kroom. And when the sun shines, it changes into many colors (dependent upon the reflections of the sunlight)' (B.T. Berakhot 6b).

There is a midrash which expresses this idea in a charming way. Three individuals set out on a long sea voyage. The first brought his merchandise to sell - a large box filled with diamonds. The second brought a large box filled with silk garments. The third had no baggage but claimed that his merchandise was superior to that of the others. A storm broke, and the diamonds and silks had to be cast overboard. Ultimately there was a shipwreck; the three hapless passengers found themselves penniless and friendless in a strange environment.

In short order, however, the third traveler was discovered to be a proficient Torah scholar and was asked to become the spiritual leader of the Jewish community there. 'I told you,' he said to his incredulous companions, 'I had the best merchandise.'

His earliest dream was a spiritual one, of ascending and descending angels, of connecting heaven and earth, of returning to Israel, of erecting an altar to God. He wanted to be rather than to own. But he was jealous of his older brother, Esau - and especially of the fact that 'Isaac loved Esau, because of the hunt in his mouth' (Gen. 25:28).

Shabbat Shalom

A VIEW FROM NOV



By MOSHE KOHN

It is interesting to note the crucial role played by women in the unfolding of the history narrated in the Torah. There are, for example, Eve's initiative in eating of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge; Sarah's initiative in driving away Hagar and Ishmael; Rebecca's initiative in getting Jacob the birthright-blessing, though Esau was the firstborn son.

Jacob and the speckled sheep

for him." God therefore decides to create "out of the adam every beast of the field and every fowl in the sky, and He brought them to the adam to see what he would call them; and whatever the adam called every living creature would be its name."

begats. Here, too, it is the women who name their children, with each name telling a story through a play on words. Only Benjamin/Binyamin is named so by Jacob after Rachel, who died while giving birth to him, had with her dying breath named him Ben Oni, meaning "son of my sorrow" (Genesis 35).

breed of sheep whose origin is not known with any certainty, though it is believed that they originated in Mesopotamia." Further investigation led the Aumanns to the Jacob Sheep Society. It was founded in England in 1969, by Lady Aramintha Aldington, daughter of the last high commissioner of Mandatory Palestine, General Sir Alan Cunningham.

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Inside

NBA bans Sprewell for year
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Sports Editors
Joe Hoffman & Ori Liss

Hartson leads pack, praises Berkovic

LONDON (AP) — Arsenal surely wish they hadn't sold John Hartson.

The red-headed West Ham striker, who came over from Arsenal 10 months ago for a paltry £3.2 million, leads the Premier League with 17 goals in only 20 matches. Since coming over from Arsenal he has 22 goals in 31 games.

Arsenal basically bet on their striker Ian Wright instead of Hartson. It might have been a bad bet and rumors already abound that major European teams like Juventus are trying to buy him.

Wright is struggling for goals, with much of the scoring responsibility falling on the shoulders of Dutchman Dennis Bergkamp, who has 12, third in the league. Andy Cole of Manchester United is second with 13.

With West Ham, Hartson has teamed up front with Israeli striker Eyal Berkovic. And he gives Berkovic much of the credit.

"Berkovic is great on the ball and looks to put you in with every pass," said the Welshman. "He's been brilliant this season, and I'm very grateful for the chances I'm getting."

Manchester United lead the Premier League with 34 points in 16 followed by Chelsea (31), Blackburn (30) and Leeds (29).

The biggest games this weekend are Manchester United at Liverpool and Arsenal at Newcastle. In an intense London derby, Tottenham with new manager Christian Gross are home to Chelsea. On Sunday, Southampton are at Wimbledon.

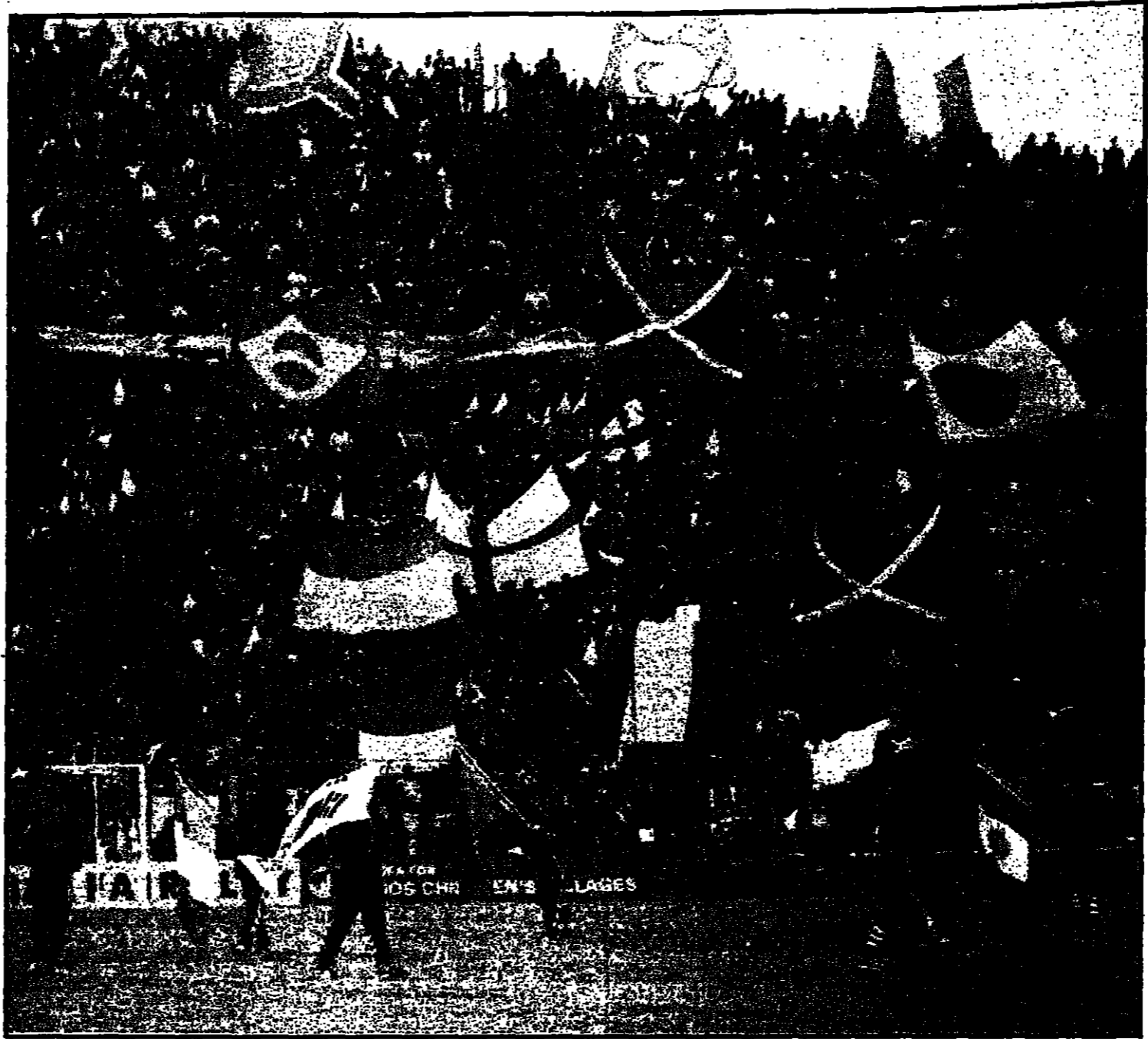
In other games tomorrow: Aston Villa vs. Coventry, Blackburn vs. Bolton, Derby vs. West Ham, Leeds vs. Everton and Leicester vs. Crystal Palace.

Also, 36 teams play second-round games tomorrow in the FA Cup with mostly third-division and semi-pro teams playing off.

In Scotland, leaders Hearts are home to Motherwell with No. 2 Rangers playing Sunday at home against Hibernian.

US drawn with Iran in World Cup

Germany, Yugoslavia round out Group F



WORLD CUP FEVER — Supporters wave flags before the match between Europe and the Rest of the World which preceded the draw for the World Cup in Marseille yesterday.

MARSEILLE (AP) — Four-time champions Brazil will start the defense of the World Cup against Scotland, which have never been past the first round in seven tries.

The Group A June 10 matchup at the new 80,000-capacity Stade de France at Saint-Denis outside Paris was announced at yesterday's draw ceremony.

In other eye-catching games, host France will play debutant South Africa in Marseille June 12 in their first match of the World Cup finals and three-time titlist Germany will start with a game against the United States in Paris June 15.

The draw, conducted for the first time in the open air, threw up four easy groupings, two tough ones and two well-balanced ones. With half the teams going out after the opening round of group matches, nations such as England, 1994 semifinalist Bulgaria and the United States looked in danger of going home early.

England, who had hoped to be seeded and avoid some of the powerhouse teams, were grouped with Romania and Colombia in Group G but at least would be confident of beating Tunisia.

Bulgaria were forced to play Spain, Olympic titlist Nigeria and improving South American nation Paraguay.

The United States face powerhouses Germany, a three-time titlist and European champion, and Yugoslavia, who reached the finals by twice crushing Hungary in the playoffs.

The Americans also must face Iran. The two nations have been at diplomatic loggerheads since radical Iranians seized the US Embassy in Tehran 18 years ago.

Iran were the last team to qualify for the 32-nation finals, beating Australia in the final playoff game on Saturday.

Netherlands and Belgium, who played each other in the qualifying round, open against each other June 13 in Saint-Denis in Group E.

Brazil and Italy, who played out the last final in 1994, look well placed to make it to the last 16.

After playing Scotland, the Brazilians face Morocco and Norway, and will be confident of gaining one of the two qualifying

All Star game warms up the crowd

MARSEILLE (AP) — The Rest of the World, with Ronaldo and Gabriel Batistuta dazzling the crowd, jogged and joked to a 5-2 win over Europe in an exhibition match ahead of yesterday's World Cup draw.

Marius Lacatus of Romania opened the score in the second minute, punishing an awful clearance from Morocco's Nouredine Naybet with an angled drive that gave Jacques Songo'o of Cameroon no chance.

After that the Rest of the World took over with five strikes. Ronaldo's pass beat the offside trap in the 16th minute, allowing Colombia's Antony De Avila to sneak through and grab the equalizer.

Ronaldo scored himself six minutes later, faking his way past Spain's Fernando Hierro and beating German goalkeeper Andreas Koepke with a low shot.

The Brazilian captain passed to the unmarked Batistuta in the 30th minute, and the Argentine star unleashed his lethal right foot to put some more distance between the teams.

An identical combination seven minutes later added a fourth goal.

Ronaldo used his speed on a deep ball in the 43rd minute and beat out Koepke outside the area before tapping it into the empty net, raising another loud cheer from the 38,000 crowd at the Stade Velodrome.

places.

The Italians, who squeezed into the finals after a playoff against Russia, face Chile in their opening game June 11 in Bordeaux. They then go on to meet Cameroon June 17 at Montpellier and Austria June 23 in Stade de France.

Although Cameroon have made it for the third time in a row, it looks nowhere near as strong as when it made the quarterfinal in 1990.

The French also look favored to reach the second round, especially on home territory.

After meeting the South Africans, they face Saudi Arabia June 18 at Stade de France and finally under-achiever Denmark June 24 in Lyon.

Argentina, a two-time winner, play against three debutants but one of them, Croatia, are an impressive newcomer with some big stars.

The South Americans, who won in 1978 and 1986, start against Japan June 14 at Toulouse, then meet Jamaica June 21 at Parc des Princes in Paris, and then have their only tough game, against the Croatians, June 26 in Bordeaux.

"This is the highest quality group. The English group is also complicated but I believe that our group is the most difficult," said Spanish coach Javier Clemente.

"I always said we would have to watch out for the Africans, and it turns out that we have to play Nigeria, the best of them, and we

have to play them at 2 p.m. which is the hottest time of the day.

England manager Glenn Hoddle said, "All in all, we're not displeased with the three teams we got. Romania have got a good pedigree and have done well in the last two World Cups and have a group of players who have been together a long time," Hoddle said. "In some way they are more experienced than we are."

"Colombia are a team that can be really skilful but on another day you might just catch them."

Craig Brown, Scotland manager, faced the challenge of playing the defending champions in the opener. "They couldn't come any tougher than Brazil in the opening game. We played Brazil in three previous World Cups and lost each time so we have a chance to redeem ourselves. But it will be very difficult in the opening match."

Dutch coach Guus Hiddink said he was amazed his team had to play Belgium again. "They also met in the last finals in the US where the Belgians won 1-0 in the first round."

"It's curious. As I flew to Marseille from Brussels I thought it could just happen that we meet each other. After what happened in America we must be careful."

South African defender Sizwe Motaung was upbeat about his team's draw. "We are happy and I can assure you we will make South Africa proud," he said.

World Cup draw

Group A	Brazil	Rest of World
Group B	France	Spain
Group C	Italy	Germany
Group D	USA	Yugoslavia
Group E	Netherlands	Belgium
Group F	France	Germany
Group G	France	Germany
Group H	France	Germany
Group I	France	Germany

Phillips gets second chance with Dolphins

DAVIE, Florida (AP) — Lawrence Phillips stood with his back to the wall, eager to put the past behind him.

"I'm not here to get into all that," he said. "I'm here to play football."

And so he did, taking the field Wednesday for the first time since being released last month by the St. Louis Rams. The talented but troubled running back has a new team — the Miami Dolphins — and a fresh start.

Phillips reported for practice one day after signing a contract

Alvarez signs with Devil Rays

ST. PETERSBURG (AP) — Tampa Bay Devil Rays general manager Chuck LaMar made Wilson Alvarez one of the highest-paid pitchers in baseball on Wednesday.

Alvarez, 33, with a 3.48 ERA with the Chicago White Sox and San Francisco Giants last season, agreed to a \$35 million, five-year deal that matches Florida's Alex Fernandez for the fifth-highest average salary among pitchers at \$7m.

The move also reunites him with reliever Roberto Hernandez, who signed a \$22.5m deal with Tampa Bay on the night of the expansion draft. The two began last season with the White Sox and helped the Giants win the NL West after being traded to San Francisco on July 31.

Among pitchers, Alvarez's average salary trails only Greg Maddux (\$11.5m), Tom Glavine (\$8.5m), Roger Clemens (\$8.25m) and John Smoltz (\$7.75m).

Chicago hire Manuel as manager

The Chicago White Sox hired Florida Marlins bench coach Jerry Manuel as manager yesterday, replacing Terry Bevington, who was fired after a disappointing season.

Manuel never has managed at the major league level. He managed AAA Indianapolis in 1991 and AA Jacksonville in 1990.

Manuel, 43, spent portions of five seasons in the majors, compiling a .150 batting average in 127 at-bats with Detroit, Montreal and San Diego.

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